

## Alcohol Ordinance Public Listening Sessions

**Date:** September 6, 2017

**Time:** 2pm

**Location:** Coastal Georgia Center

### Summary:

- Introductions and Agenda Review – emphasis on this being a listening session for the City to hear input from the public (reference meeting PowerPoint for additional information)
  - Our Process
  - Ground rules
  - Background
  - Purpose of Ordinance
  - Establish reasonable and ascertainable standards for the regulation and control of alcohol beverages in a manner to promote health, safety and general welfare of the community, while giving effect to zoning and land use plans, preserving residential areas with reasonable consideration for their character and with the general intent of promoting desirable living conditions and sustaining the stability of neighborhoods and property values.
  - Data on Licensed Alcohol Establishments
  - Enforcement Actions
  - Listening Session: Additional Revisions to Ordinance?
  - Timeline and Next steps
- Process
  - Host public meetings & obtain feedback
  - Finalize possible revisions
  - Present to council
- ABC Unit
  - Review of mission and the services provided by the ABC unit
- Bar Cards
  - Out of 1,728 applications only 26 were denied
    - Cause for denial aligns with the three criteria. Convicted within 36 months of:
      - violation of any law, ordinance or regulation governing the sale of alcoholic beverages
      - a violent crime or
      - possession of illegal drugs
  - Police want to retain the background checks component of the ordinance
  - Comments from the public
    - Melissa (last name not available)
      - Would like to do away with the bar cards
      - The process of obtaining a bar card is too much of a hassle
    - Michael from Savannah Distillery
      - A bar card is important for employees and owners
      - Owners should take responsibility to understand what safe serve is
      - Not everyone should need a bar card

## Alcohol Ordinance Public Listening Sessions

- General discussion regarding the need to clarify the language regarding who needs a bar card
  - Consideration that dishwashers, etc. shouldn't be required to have one just because they touch beverages that have alcohol
- William Lord noted that most complaints until now have been for extraneous people to have bar cards (bus boys etc.)
- Mike from GA Restaurant Association
  - Not in favor of continuing bar cards because he sees them as: ineffective, inconsistent, changes are causing confusion, job market is already tight and this hurts entry level employment opportunities
- Consideration for dropping the background check period from 36 months to 24 months
- Interest in removing the sale to under age people as a barrier to getting a bar card because the quality and proliferation of fake IDs
- John from Molly McPhersons:
  - Consideration for a virtual bar card
  - Agrees with felony being a barrier to a bar card, but not a misdemeanor
  - The process needs to be streamlined
- It is hard enough to find employees and this makes it harder.
  - This hurts downtown businesses finding staff considering the problems staff already have with parking
- The City needs to be more specific regarding who needs a bar card
  - Preference for wording in existing ordinance, but removal of door person
- Need a longer grace period for the person to work while awaiting the bar card
- Hybrid Revisions
  - Under 21 with live entertainment is not an issue
  - When open to the public and the mode of operation remains unchanged
    - Discussion regarding full menu service
  - Comments from the public
    - Former hybrid language "full menu" requirement caused issues
    - Consideration for appetizers as a lower barrier to food requirement
    - Mode of operation – eg: kitchen closing. Need to redefine "mode of operation"
      - Mike (GA Restaurant Association) – would like it to address examples such as sports bar with food changing to a dance floor in the evening
      - Consider a "late night" menu rather than "full menu"
    - Late night menus result in a cost to keep the kitchens open due to lack of sales
      - Consider "happy hour" food
    - Need to define the bar area
      - Example of the Prohibition Museum

## **Alcohol Ordinance Public Listening Sessions**

- Sunday sales
  - Dictated by state law
  - Need to hone in on enforcement piece
- Distance exception
  - Consider connecting to small hotel/large hotel standards
  - Could match new hotel size language
- Brief discussion regarding hurricane preparation
  - Mike (GA Restaurant Association)
    - Looking for food storage
    - Restaurants could consider providing food to first responders

**Date:** September 6, 2017

**Time:** 6pm

**Location:** Coastal Georgia Center

### **Summary:**

- There was only 1 person in attendance who had not attended the meeting earlier in the day. This resulted in a shorter and targeted discussion
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  - Purpose of Ordinance
  - Establish reasonable and ascertainable standards for the regulation and control of alcohol beverages in a manner to promote health, safety and general welfare of the community, while giving effect to zoning and land use plans, preserving residential areas with reasonable consideration for their character and with the general intent of promoting desirable living conditions and sustaining the stability of neighborhoods and property values.
  - Data on Licensed Alcohol Establishments
  - Enforcement Actions
  - Listening Session: Additional Revisions to Ordinance?
  - Timeline and Next steps
- Bar Cards
  - Comments from the Public
    - Consideration changing background check from 36 months to 24 months
    - Consideration for felonies only and not having misdemeanors prevent getting a bar card
    - Interest in keeping door persons as required bar card holders
- Review hybrid language
  - Comments from the Public
    - Concern for people under age getting drinks from others
    - Restaurant Association prefers when kitchen closes people under 21 not allowed in bar area

## **Alcohol Ordinance Public Listening Sessions**

- Reasonable time from after kitchen closes to allow people to finish their meals
- Would like a best practices list to help businesses remain in compliance